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THE OCCUPATIONS OF NONCOLLEGE GOING YOUTH.

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THE OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF YOUNG MEN AND CONDITIONS AFFECTING THEIR AMBITIONS AND FULFILLMENT WERE REPORTED. A SAMPLE OF 4,186 MEN WERE LOCATED FOR A FOLLOWUP 7 YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION. THE PARENTS WERE ASKED TO REPORT CURRENT OCCUPATION FOR THEIR SONS, EDUCATION FOLLOWING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, MARITAL STATUS, AND MILITARY STATUS. THE OCCUPATIONS WERE CONSISTENT WITH THE OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS EXPRESSED AT THE TIME OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION. THOSE WHO ENROLLED FOR SOME TYPE OF EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL BOTH ASPIRED TO AND ATTAINED OCCUPATIONS OF HIGHER PRESTIGE THAN THOSE WHO DID NOT CONTINUE THEIR SCHOOLING. (RS)

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THE OCCUPATIONS OF NON-COLLEGE GOING YOUTH

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THE OCCUPATIONS OF NON-COLLEGE GOING YOUTH[1]

This study presents information about the current occupational status of more than 3,000 young men who graduated from Wisconsin high schools in Spring, 1957. Shortly prior to their graduation, they had provided information about their plans beyond high school, their educational and occupational aspirations, and considerable background information about themselves and their families. Earlier studies have analyzed this body of information with respect to the graduates who planned to attend college and the circumstances that facilitated or impeded their college attendance.[2] The present report focuses on the non-college bound youth, their current occupational status, and circumstances associated with the level of occupations they have attained. In a world of work which places increasing premium upon level of education and specialized types of training, it is important to have specific information about the occupational destinies of the 75-80% of American youth whose education stops short of a college degree. The following data shed interesting light on this question, and on some of the conditions affecting occupational ambitions and their fulfillment among this group of young men.

THE PROCEDURE

The Sample.--In Spring, 1957, more than 35,000 seniors in Wisconsin high schools, public and private, completed schedules of information about their plans beyond high school and provided other data useful to this and previous studies. These seniors represented 95% of all Wisconsin high school graduates of 1957.

The present data deal with a random sample of one-third of the 35,000 seniors for whom pertinent information was complete (N = 10,321).

The Search.--The seniors were traced through postal cards sent to their parents at the address given by the seniors at the time they completed the schedule of information prior to graduation. The search began in early Spring 1964 and continued until early Spring 1965. Telephone calls were used to follow up seniors for whom no information was received by mail. By persistent effort, and the use of public records to locate many parents who had moved, a final return of 8,800 was reached (85%). Of these 4,186 were men; 4,614, women. The present study deals with men only.

The information deals with differences in occupational status seven to eight years following graduation among groups who have had differing amounts or kinds of post-high school education.

The Inquiry.--The parents were asked to report the following kinds of information about their sons or daughters who were members of the sample used for this study.

(a) current occupation

(b) schools or colleges attended following high school graduation
    1) type of school or college
    2) if vocational school, type of training

(c) marital status

(d) military status, if in military service.

The information received does not specify whether the graduates may have received vocational or trade training in apprenticeship programs or in on-the-job training programs provided by employers.

THE FINDINGS

The beginning question is, how accurately did the graduating seniors predict their post-high school activities? The following data present the answer.

Relation Between Plans and Facts.--The seniors had reported whether they planned to attend a degree-granting college, a vocational or trade school, or to get a job in the year following their graduation. Table 1 shows the plans that they reported, and the facts as reported by their parents in this follow-up study.

TABLE 1

EDUCATIONAL PLANS AND THEIR FULFILLMENT (A)

	PLAN		FACT	
To attend college	1584	(37.8%)	1792	(42.9%)
To attend vocational school	363	(8.7%)	666	(15.9%)
To get no further schooling	2239	(53.5%)	1728	(41.2%)
N =	4186	(100.0%)	4186	(100.0%)

Obviously, many more 1957 seniors found it desirable and possible to get further education beyond high school than indicated such plans at the time of their graduation. Eight years later, the proportion who had received no further education dropped from 53.5% to 41.2%. The greatest gain was in the attendance at vocational schools, although college attendance also shows a substantial increase.

Table 1 includes 378 men who were attending school at the time of the inquiry. It also includes 447 who were in military service, and 58 who were unemployed. These three groups add to 883 individuals who could not be classified in the analysis of occupational status which follows. Hence, all subsequent tables will account for no more than 3,303 (4,186 less 883).

Since Table 1 does not reveal how many men in each category of plans actually fulfilled those plans, Table 2 was constructed to provide this information.

TABLE 2

EDUCATIONAL PLANS AND THEIR FULFILLMENT (B)

PLAN	TYPE OF POST-HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION			
	NONE	VOCATIONAL	COLLEGE	TOTAL
No further schooling	40.3% (1332)	11.2% (369)	6.8% (224)	58.3% (1925)
Attend vocational school	3.8% (123)	3.6% (120)	1.8% (61)	9.2% (304)
Attend college	3.2% (106)	2.7% (89)	26.6% (879)	32.5% (1074)
TOTAL	47.3% (1561)	17.5% (578)	35.2% (1164)	100.0% N = 3303

Since Table 2 does not include the 883 men who were not included in the occupational analysis which follows, the percentages shown underestimate the proportions who actually attended some type of school after high school graduation. A comparison between Table 1 and Table 2 shows the underestimate to be 7.1%.

Table 2 shows that sizeable numbers of senior boys who had no definite plans for education beyond high school actually did attend some type of school during the eight year period following their graduation. While 58.3% reported that they did not plan further schooling, 18% actually attended post-high school educational institutions. In addition, this group of seniors included 198 who are now in military service. Many of these men are no doubt receiving occupationally useful training in their tours of military duty.

Note also that a substantially larger number of students attended vocational or trade schools than had reported plans to do so. To this group should be added 29 men now in military service who also reported having attended a vocational school. The total number who attended vocational-type schools is almost twice the number who had such plans.

The plans of seniors expecting to attend college were the most stable of the three groups. To this group should be added 277 who are now in school, and 108 who are commissioned officers in the military service. More than 90% of the senior boys who were college-bound actually attended college.[3/]

In summary, the direction of the difference between plans and their fulfillment is consistently toward higher numbers attending some type of educational institution beyond high school. Almost a fourth received more formal education or training than they anticipated at high school graduation. The increase is seen at both vocational school and college levels. More than 10% were attending school seven or eight years following high school graduation.

Table 3 shows that the trend toward post-high school education is participated in by persons in all ranges of scholastic ability. The trend toward vocational-type training is evident in all three groups. The number attending college, however, also increased slightly in all ability groups.

TABLE 3
EDUCATIONAL PLANS AND THEIR FULFILLMENT (ability groups)

SCHOLASTIC ABILITY*	(a) PLAN	(b) FACT	(a) - (b) DIFFERENCE
1. High 1/3 (N = 981)			
No further schooling	36.0% (353)	25.9% (254)	-10.1% (99)
Attend vocational school	7.2% (71)	14.5% (142)	+ 7.3% (+71)
Attend college	56.8% (557)	59.6% (585)	+ 2.2% (+28)
2. Middle 1/3 (N = 1132)			
No further schooling	59.5% (674)	46.0% (521)	-13.5% (-153)
Attend vocational school	9.5% (108)	19.0% (215)	+ 9.5% (+107)
Attend college	31.0% (250)	35.0% (396)	+ 4.0% (+ 46)
3. Low 1/3 (N = 1190)			
No further schooling	75.5% (898)	66.0% (786)	- 9.5% (-112)
Attend vocational school	10.5% (125)	18.6% (221)	+10.1% (+ 96)
Attend college	14.0% (167)	15.4% (183)	+ 1.4% (+ 26)

* Scores on Henmon-Nelson Test of Mental Ability

The Non-College Going Youth.--Attention now turns to a description of the youth who did not attend a degree-granting college. As shown in Table 2, these youth comprise 64.8% of the sample students (N = 3303). In scholastic ability, they comprised 40% of the seniors in the top third of scholastic ability; 65% of those in the middle-third; and 85% of the lowest third. In achievement in high school studies, they comprised 40% of the youth who achieved ranks in the top half of their class, and 77% of the youth who had ranks in the bottom half of their class. The median rank or scholastic ability was at the 48 percentile; on achievement in high school studies at the 29 percantile. The low percentile in high school achievement must be interpreted with the knowledge that the median rank of all senior boys was at the 39th percentile. Nevertheless, the picture for the non-college youth is one of average aptitude for school with less than average school achievement. It is an interesting sidelight, however, that 14% of the senior boys who attended college were in the lower half of their class in scholastic ability; 17% in the lower half in high school achievement.

Certain background characteristics are pertinent. Table 4 shows the size of the community in which the seniors attended high school.

TABLE 4

SIZE OF HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY

POPULATION (county)-/cities/w	NON-COLLEGE GOING		ALL SENIORS (MEN)	
Less than 2,500	11%	(235)	12%	(391)
2,500 - 4,999	12%	(246)	10%	(327)
5,000 - 9,999	17%	(354)	14%	(498)
10,000 -24,999	8%	(160)	7%	(217)
25,000 -49,999	22%	(463)	23%	(740)
Metropolitan Areas				
Brown, Kenosha, Racine, Douglas	8%	(161)	9%	(275)
Dane	4%	(93)	3%	(150)
Milwaukee, Waukesha	17%	(373)	21%	(663)
	N = 2085		N = 3261	

The non-college bound youth are found in slightly larger proportions among those who attended high schools in communities of less than 25,000 people. In general, however, the distribution of non-college bound youth closely resembles the distribution of the total sample studied.

The educational attainment of the fathers has been found to be associated with the educational aspirations of their sons. Table 5 sets forth the facts on this sample of seniors.

TABLE 5

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FATHERS OF
(Non-College Bound Youth)

Level of education	NON-COLLEGE	ALL SENIORS
Less than high school	49% (1130)	45% (1465)
Some high school	16% (367)	16% (531)
High school graduation	29% (672)	27% (866)
Some college	6% (136)	12% (399)

Proportionately fewer fathers of the fathers of the non-college bound sons had attended college. Proportionately more fathers had not even attended high schools. Lest too much significance be placed on the low level of father's education, it is important to know that almost 29% of the senior boys who attended college had fathers who did not attend high school.

The occupations of the fathers are of interest. Table 6 presents such information.

TABLE 6

OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF
(Non-College Bound Youth)

OCCUPATIONS	NON-COLLEGE GOING	ALL SENIORS
Unskilled workers	(923) 44%	(1281) 40%
Farming occupations	(549) 26%	(710) 22%
Skilled workers	(208) 10%	(331) 10%
White collar workers	(323) 15%	(631) 19%
Professional, executive	(97) 5%	(308) 9%
	N = 2105	N = 3261

In comparison with the whole sample of seniors, proportionately more fathers of non-college bound sons were in farming or unskilled occupations. Proportionately fewer fathers were in white collar, professional or executive positions. Nevertheless, 16% of all senior boys who attended college had fathers who were in farming or unskilled occupations.

This study yields no information upon the dollar incomes of the families. The original 1957 data, however, contained estimates by the high school seniors of the relative financial position of their families among the families of their community. It also contained estimates of the ability of their parents to provide financial support for a college education. A combination of these data with the occupational and attained educational level of the parents was used to form a scale of the socio-economic status of the family.[4/] Table 7 presents this data.

TABLE 7

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FAMILY
(Non-College Bound Youth)

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS	NON-COLLEGE GOING	ALL SENIORS
Low 1/3	39% (829)	33% (1042)
Middle 1/3	39% (810)	34% (1140)
High 1/3	22% (466)	33% (1082)

The pattern noticed in previous tables repeats itself in the socio-economic status of the families of the non-college bound youth--proportionately more of these seniors came from families with low socio-economic status; proportionately fewer from homes with high socio-economic status.

In summary, the non-college youth are now about 26 years old. They came from all levels of scholastic aptitude and achievement, from rural and metropolitan areas, from all strata of socio-economic status. In comparison with all of their classmates, however, they came from families with lower socio-economic status in which there were large numbers of fathers who were in

unskilled or farming occupations and who had not progressed beyond an elementary school education. The boys themselves had ranged across the whole range of scholastic ability and achievement in high school. The typical non-college youth, however, had scholastic aptitude but performed below the average of his classmates in high school studies.

The Vocational School Student.-- In discussing the non-college going student we have included all senior boys who did not attend degree-granting colleges. This group, however, included a sizeable group of students who did continue their education in vocational or trade schools. In some states such students would probably have enrolled in the vocational or technical programs of junior colleges, and thus would be included among the college-going group. In Wisconsin, most such students enroll in private or public schools of vocational, technical and adult education. It is useful, then, to separate these students from those who attended no institution of post-high school education. Comparisons are made between the vocational school student and the group who did not attend any type of school following high school graduation.

More than 17% of senior boys attended a vocational or trade school of some type. As was shown in Table 2 these 578 boys were nearly twice as many as reported plans to attend such schools. In what ways do these differ from the boys who attended no type of educational institution after high school graduation? Table 8 makes this comparison on the same set of characteristics previously used to describe all non-college going youth. This table also shows how each of the two groups differ from a norm provided by all senior boys in the sample.

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH STUDENTS ATTENDING NO SCHOOL

CHARACTERISTICS	VOCATIONAL SCHOOL N = 578	NO SCHOOL N = 1529	ALL SENIORS N = 3261
1. Scholastic Ability			
In top 1/2	42%	32%	48%
In low 1/2	58%	68%	52%
2. High School Achievement			
In top 1/2	32%	22%	38%
In low 1/2	68%	78%	62%
(co./cities/w)			
3. Size of Community			
Less than 10,000	36%	43%	39%
10,000 - 49,999	25%	32%	27%
Metropolitan areas	39%	25%	34%
4. Father's Occupation			
Unskilled workers	42%	45%	39%
Farming	21%	28%	22%
Skilled workers	11%	9%	10%
White collar	19%	14%	20%
Professional, executive	7%	4%	9%
5. Father's Education			
No high school	50%	56%	46%
Attended high school	16%	17%	16%
High school graduate	24%	22%	26%
Attended college	10%	5%	12%
6. Socio-Economic Status			
High 1/3	37%	42%	33%
Middle 1/3	41%	39%	34%
Low 1/3	22%	19%	33%

The vocational school students on most comparisons looks very much like a cross-section of the total class. The vocational students tend to be somewhat lower than average in scholastic aptitude and high school achievement, but their community and family backgrounds are not strikingly different from their class taken as a whole. The differences tend however, toward under-representation of college-educated fathers who have professional and executive positions, and over-representation of fathers whose education did not reach to the high school level, and who are in unskilled occupations.

The striking differences are found among the youth who did not continue their education after high school. Two-thirds of these boys were in the lowest half of their classes in scholastic aptitude. Four-fifths were in the lowest half in high school achievement. Three-fourths went to high school in communities of less than 10,000 people. Three-fourths of their fathers were in unskilled or farming occupations. Three-fourths of the fathers were not high school graduates. Two-fifths of their families ranked in the lowest third in measures of socio-economic status used in this study. Clearly the occupational outlook for such boys would appear to be strongly unfavorable. When such youth comprise 35% of the crop of male high school graduates, a problem is posed about the general welfare of these young men in the current world of occupations.

It is important to observe the difference between the situation among boys who lived in metropolitan areas. Of the boys who attended vocational schools, 39% lived in metropolitan areas. Of the boys who did not continue their schooling, 43% lived in communities of less than 10,000 people. Strong vocational school programs are available in the metropolitan areas and absent in the smaller communities. Moreover, job opportunities requiring such training are more frequent in number and variety in the metropolitan areas. The fact that 36% of those attending vocational schools attended high schools of less than 10,000 (See Table 8) suggests that many of these boys migrated to larger communities for their vocational training.

Current Occupations.--We turn now to the occupations which the parents reported that their sons were holding at the time of the inquiry. The occupations were classified according to an occupational prestige scale using the scale developed by the National Opinion Research Center as a base. No dollar income data were collected. This scale gives scores for 425 different occupations, and enables differentiations to be made between occupations which

would be lumped together in some conventional classifications of occupations (e.g. professional, skilled, white-collar, etc.) as used earlier in this study.

The distributions of occupational prestige scores for each of three groups will be shown (a) the non-school group, (b) the vocational school group, and (c) the college group. The data on college students are shown because this is the first time such data have been available and presented about this group, and because their inclusion enables more meaningful comparisons of the occupational histories of the total sample of male high school graduates. Table 9 shows the range of occupational prestige scores for each group and the 75th percentile, the median, and 25th percentile scores.

TABLE 9

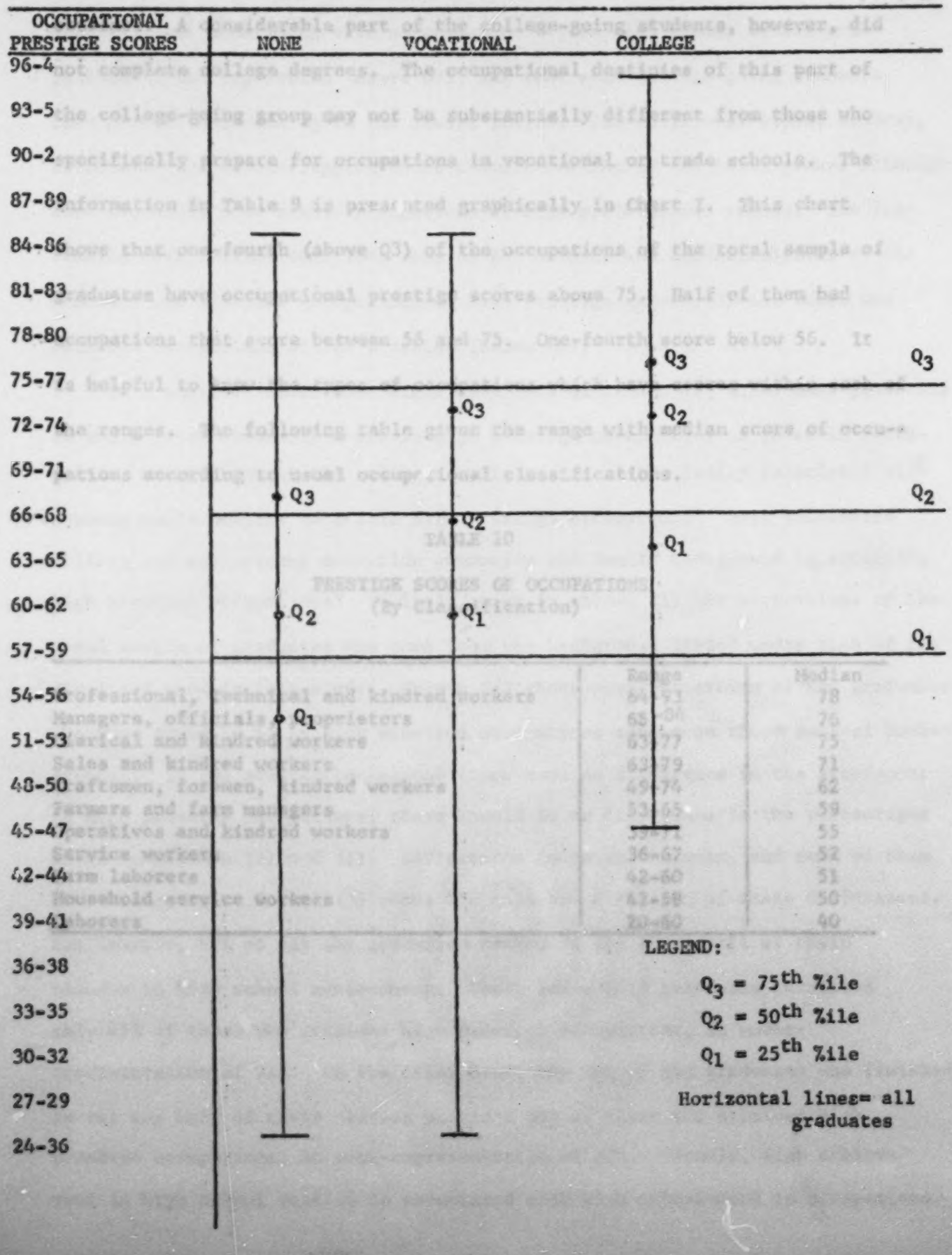
DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCORES
(By Type of Education Beyond High School)

OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCORES	NONE (N = 1529)	VOCATIONAL (N = 576)	COLLEGE (N = 1156)	ALL GRADUATES (N = 3261)
90-99	--	--	4	4
80-89	14	17	266	297
70-79	293	200	558	1051
60-69	442	211	205	858
50-59	636	132	107	875
40-49	132	14	16	162
30-39	8	1	--	9
20-29	4	1	--	5
10-19	--	--	--	--
0- 9	--		--	--
75th %ile	68.5	73.7	76.2	75.1
50th %ile	59.3	66.6	72.8	67.4
25th %ile	53.5	59.5	65.0	56.0

As expected, there is a progressive rise in the occupational prestige scores from those who had no post-high school education to those with vocational type schooling to the college-going graduates. But just as interesting is the very large overlap between the three groups. For example, more than a fourth of the non-school graduates were in occupations having higher prestige than

CHART I

COMPARISON OF OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCORES
(By Type of Education)



one-fourth of the college-going students and one-fourth of the vocational school students exceed in occupational prestige one-half of the college students. A considerable part of the college-going students, however, did not complete college degrees. The occupational destinies of this part of the college-going group may not be substantially different from those who specifically prepare for occupations in vocational or trade schools. The information in Table 9 is presented graphically in Chart I. This chart shows that one-fourth (above Q3) of the occupations of the total sample of graduates have occupational prestige scores aboue 75. Half of them had occupations that score between 56 and 75. One-fourth score below 56. It is helpful to know the types of occupations which have scores within each of the ranges. The following table gives the range with median score of occupations according to usual occupational classifications.

TABLE 10

PRESTIGE SCORES OF OCCUPATIONS
(By Classification)

	Range	Median
Professional, Technical and kindred workers	64-93	78
Managers, officials, proprietors	65-84	76
Clerical and kindred workers	63-77	75
Sales and kindred workers	63-79	71
Craftsmen, foremen, kindred workers	49-74	62
Farmers and farm managers	53-65	59
Operatives and kindred workers	39-71	55
Service workers	36-67	52
Farm laborers	42-60	51
Household service workers	42-58	50
Laborers	20-60	40

A high degree of overlap between the occupations held by graduates with differing levels of post-high school education is evident. It is interesting, however, that some youth with no education beyond high school attain occupations in the top fourth (above Q3); and that some college-going students have occupations ranking in the lowest fourth. The vocational school student, as pointed out earlier, approximates a cross-section of the total group, although understandably none attain occupations of high professional status. The discussion that follows describes some of the origins and characteristics of the students who attained occupations of high prestige (above Q3) and those who attained occupations of low prestige (below Q1).

This analysis sheds some light upon such questions as, do as many graduates in small rural communities attain high prestige occupations as those in metropolitan areas? How is the socio-economic status of the family associated with a young man's ability to attain high prestige occupations? Does scholastic ability and achievement over-ride community and family background in attaining high prestige occupations? Table 11 shows in column (1) the proportions of the total sample of graduates who come from the background listed under each of the six items used in this study. Column (2) shows what proportion of the graduates who were found to be in high prestige occupations came from these several backgrounds. If the several background items made no difference in the attainment of high prestige occupations, there should be no difference in the percentages shown in columns (1) and (2). Differences do exist, however, and some of them are substantial. Column (3) shows the size and direction of these differences. For example, 62% of all the graduates ranked in the lower half of their classes in high school achievement. These lower half graduates furnished only 41% of those who attained high prestige occupations, an under-representation of 21%. On the other hand, the 38% of the graduates who finished in the top half of their classes provided 50% of those who attained high prestige occupations; an over-representation of 21%. Clearly, high achievement in high school studies is associated with high achievement in occupations.

TABLE 11

COMPOSITION OF GRADUATES IN HIGH PRESTIGE OCCUPATIONS

CHARACTERISTICS	(1) PERCENT ALL GRADUATES	(2) PERCENT OF HIGH PREST. OCC.	(3) DIFFERENCE (1) - (2)
1. Size of Community			
Counties w/cities:			
Not over 10,000	39%	30%	-9%
10,000-24,999	10%	7%	-3%
25,000-49,999	17%	22%	+5%
Metropolitan areas	34%	41%	+7%
2. Socio-economic Status			
Low 1/3	33%	20%	-13%
Middle 1/3	34%	33%	+ 1%
High 1/3	33%	47%	+14%
3. Father's Occupation			
Farming	22%	15%	-7%
Unskilled	39%	35%	-4%
Skilled	10%	10%	None
White collar	20%	25%	+5%
Professional	9%	15%	+6%
4. Father's Education			
No high school	46%	34%	-12%
Some high school	16%	13%	- 3%
High school graduate	26%	32%	+ 6%
Some college	12%	21%	+ 9%
5. Scholastic Aptitude			
Low 1/2	52%	32%	-21%
High 1/2	48%	68%	+20%
6. High School Achievement			
Low 1/2	62%	41%	-21%
High 1/2	38%	59%	+21%
7. Level of Education			
High school only	47%	18%	-29%
Vocational school	18%	14%	+ 4%
Some college	35%	68%	+33%

The very high proportion of boys who rank in the lower half of their classes in high school studies is a phenomenon often overlooked. This situation is a result of the fact that in general girls receive much higher grades than boys, and so crowd them out of the higher ranks in class.[6/] The median class rank for boys in the sample used in this study is at the 44th percentile. Boys who rank in the top one-half of their classes actually outrank more than 62% of their male classmates.

Study of Table 11 suggests that the following circumstances favor the attainment of high prestige occupations within 8 years following high school graduation: (a) high scholastic aptitude and achievement, (b) father is a white collar worker or in a professional executive position, (c) family has high socio-economic status, (d) live in a city over 25,000 population, and (e) attend college.

The over-riding condition to attain the high prestige occupations is to attend college. This is a circumstance forced by the fact that most of the high prestige occupations are professions or positions that require licenses or other credentials based on possession of college degrees.

We turn now to the characteristics of the group who were found to be in low prestige occupations. Table 12 portrays for this group comparable facts to those shown for the high prestige groups in Table 11.

The graduates in low prestige occupations come predominantly from rural communities; have fathers in farming occupations; have fathers whose education stopped short of high school graduation; have families of low socio-economic status; were below average in scholastic aptitude in school achievement; and have had no education beyond high school. A smaller group were more likely to be in urban communities; have fathers who are unskilled workers who have attended high school; have familes of average socio-economic status. Their scholastic achievement was probably not as good as their scholastic ability, and they were not likely to have continued their schooling beyond high school.

TABLE 12
COMPOSITION OF GRADUATES IN LOW PRESTIGE OCCUPATIONS

CHARACTERISTICS (co./cities/w)	(1) Percent ALL GRADUATES	(2) Percent of LOW PRESTIGE OCCUPATIONS	DIFFERENCE (1) - (2)
1. Size of Community			
Counties			
Not over 10,000	38%	48%	+ 10%
10,000-24,999	7%	8%	+ 1%
25,000-49,995	22%	22%	None
Metropolitan areas	33%	22%	- 11%
2. Socio-Economic Status			
Low 1/3	33%	40%	+ 7%
Middle 1/3	34%	40%	+ 6%
High 1/3	33%	20%	- 13%
3. Father's Occupation			
Farming	22%	35%	+ 13%
Unskilled	39%	42%	+ 3%
Skilled	10%	9%	- 1%
White collar	20%	11%	- 9%
Professional	9%	3%	- 6%
4. Father's Educations			
No high school	46%	58%	+ 12%
Some high school	16%	17%	+ 1%
High school graduate	26%	19%	- 7%
Some college	12%	6%	- 6%
5. Scholastic Aptitude			
Low 1/2	52%	67%	+ 15%
High 1/2	48%	33%	--15%
6. High School Achievement			
Low 1/2	62%	77%	+ 15%
High ;/2	38%	23%	- 15%
7. Level of Education			
High School only	47%	76%	+ 29%
Vocational School	18%	13%	- 5%
Some College	35%	11%	- 24%

The Middle Prestige Occupations.--So far we have pointed out the nature of the groups who were found in low and high prestige occupations. The nature of the occupations of average prestige is interesting for different reasons. First of all, they include, by definition, half of the occupations which all graduates attained. Thirty percent of the youth who had no schooling beyond high school have occupations within this range; 60% of those who attended vocational school, and 45% of those who attended college. Obviously, schooling beyond high school is less necessary to hold occupations within this range, but vocational schooling seems to be a help. Table 13 shows the proportions of each of the three groups that were found in the middle prestige occupations. These proportions bears close resemblance to the proportions within the total sample of graduates. The vocational school students shows a gain in representation; the college group, a corresponding loss.

TABLE 13

MIDDLE PRESTIGE OCCUPATIONS, BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	PERCENT OF ALL GRADUATES	PERCENT OF MIDDLE OCCUP.	DIFFERENCE
High School only	47%	47%	None
Vocational School	18%	21%	+ 3
College	35%	32%	- 3

In summary, out of every ten graduates with middle prestige occupations, five stopped their education at high school graduation, two went to vocational school, and three went to college. In all probability the three who attended college did not complete college degree.

Occupational Aspirations.--At the time of their graduation, the seniors indicated the type of occupation which "I hope eventually to enter." Their responses were tabulated according to the NORC occupational prestige score. Thus, a direct comparison was possible between the occupation they hoped to

enter" and the occupation in which they were found seven to eight years later. Chart II, portrays these facts according to the three levels of post-high school education.

The close correspondence between job aspiration at high school graduation and jobs held eight years later suggests that most of the seniors viewed their occupational future with considerable realism. There is evidence of both unrealistic optimum and unnecessary pessimism on the part of some members of all three groups. In general, however, those who enrolled for some type of education beyond high school both aspired to and attained occupations of higher prestige than those who did not continue their schooling. The failure of the college-going group to reach the level of their aspirations is probably accounted for by two circumstances. First, many of them who started to college did not complete degrees which were necessary to enter their intended occupations. Second, some of them either are still students in professional or graduate schools, or have been in the occupational world only a comparatively short time. The fulfillment of their occupational objectives may wait until 10-15 years after high school graduation.

The relation between job aspiration and job attainment among groups having the several background characteristics studies is shown in Table 14. Table 14 indicates a consistent tendency for occupational aspirations to be higher than current occupational attainment throughout the top half of graduates in all background characteristics. Clearly many of these youth expressed ambitions that were beyond reasonable likelihood of their achievement. The median or average youngster in each category was fairly close to matching his aspiration with attainment. In general, the student with background characteristics most unfavoreble for occupational attainment was found to be in occupations very close to what he had expected.

CHART II

OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION AND ACHIEVEMENT
(By Type of Post-High School Education)

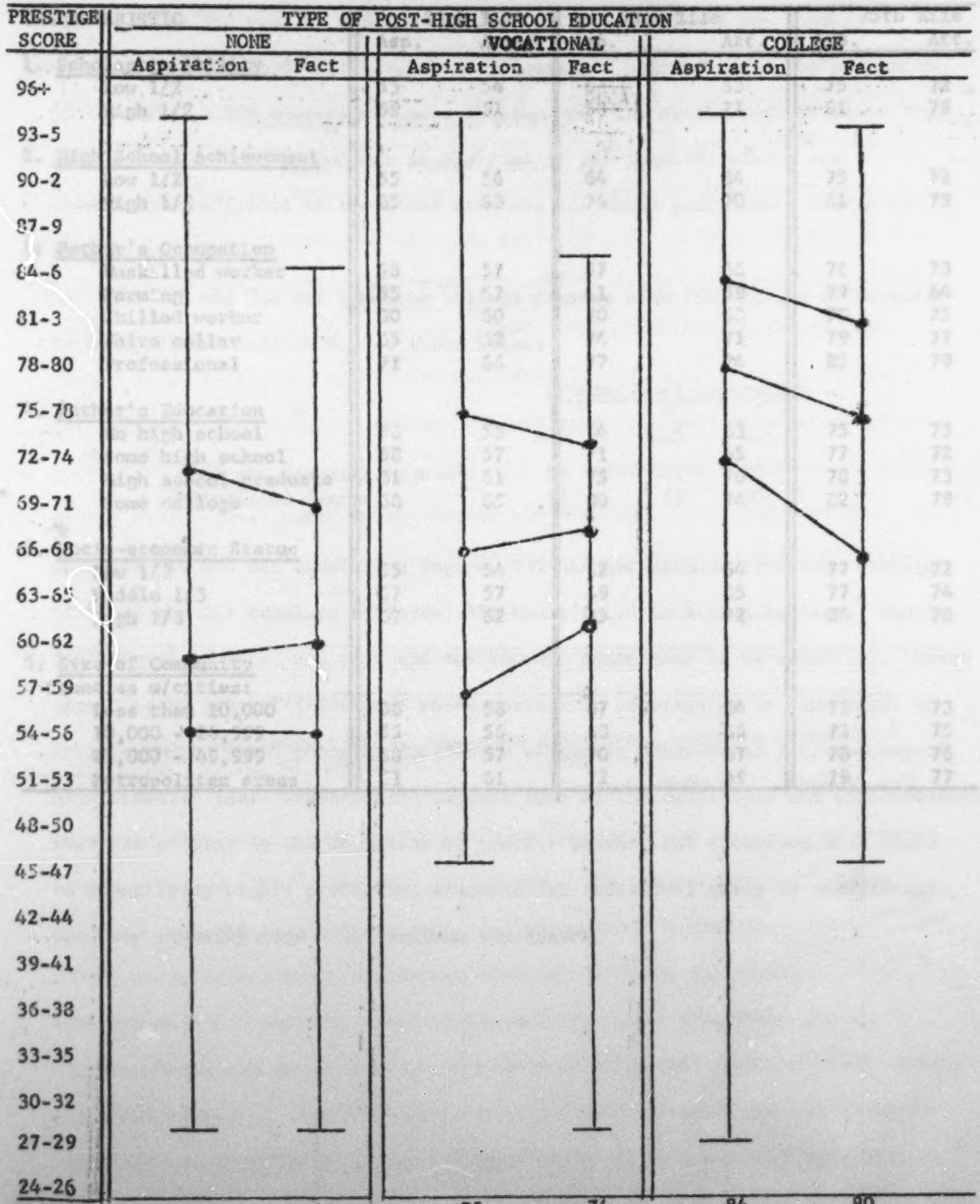


TABLE 14

OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION AND ATTAINMENT
(By Background Characteristics)

CHARACTERISTIC	25th %ile		50th %ile		75th %ile	
	Asp.	Att.	Asp.	Att.	Asp.	Att.
1. Scholastic Ability						
Low 1/2	55	54	63	63	75	72
High 1/2	59	61	68	71	81	78
2. High School Achievement						
Low 1/2	55	56	64	64	75	72
High 1/2	65	63	74	70	81	79
3. Father's Occupation						
Unskilled worker	56	57	67	66	76	73
Farming	55	57	61	59	77	64
Skilled worker	60	60	70	68	78	75
White collar	65	62	74	71	79	77
Professional	71	66	77	74	85	79
4. Father's Education						
No high school	56	55	64	63	75	73
Some high school	58	57	71	65	77	72
High school graduate	61	61	75	70	78	73
Some college	68	65	80	74	82	79
5. Socio-economic Status						
Low 1/3	55	54	62	64	77	72
Middle 1/3	57	57	69	65	77	74
High 1/3	67	62	75	72	83	78
6. Size of Community						
Counties w/cities:						
Less than 10,000	56	56	67	64	78	73
10,000 - 24,999	56	56	68	66	78	75
25,000 - 49,999	58	57	70	67	78	76
Metropolitan areas	61	61	72	69	79	77

An interesting sidelight about the college going youth developed in the analysis of the data. It was found that eight years after graduation 64% of those who went to college had obtained a degree; 14% had graduate degrees. As mentioned earlier, these percentages underestimate the proportion of the total 4,000 seniors who have obtained or will obtain degrees since some graduates were in college at the time of the inquiry; others are commissioned officers in the armed services for which positions a degree is usually acquired.

The 36% who did not complete college degrees show interesting differences in occupational aspiration, as shown below:

	Occupational Aspiration		
	S_1	S_2	S_3
Did not complete degree	59	71	77
Completed degree	37	78	80

Of those who did not complete a degree, 53% had not planned to attend college Of those who did complete a degree, 70% had planned to attend college. Subtle differences in total attitude and environment again seem to be operating. There appear to be sets of influences which operate in combination in some cases to inhibit and in other cases to facilitate attending educational programs beyond high school. These explorations suggest some of the conditions and circumstances that are at play in the decisions of youth. Whether the situation will yield to identifying highly predictive measures for individual cases is questionable, but many investigators will continue the search.

SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

A sample of 3,000 senior boys representing 20% of those who graduated from Wisconsin high schools in 1957 were traced to learn about their post-high school education and their occupations seven to eight years following graduation. Many more (11%) had attended some type of school following graduation than had plans to do so. Almost twice as many attended vocational school than had indicated this attention, and college attendance was also substantially more frequent than planned. While college-going students are predominantly high ability graduates with parents comparatively high socio-economic status, the vocational school students are a cross-section of the graduating seniors, representing all levels of ability and background.

The youth who did not go to any type of school were predominantly from rural areas. Their parents had relatively less schooling, and were in farming or unskilled occupations. Their school achievement had been below average.

The differences in level of occupations obtained were definitely associated with the level of occupations which they had attained. But these differences, on the whole, were probably as much traceable to personal characteristics of personal ability and aspiration, level of cultural and economic background, and differences in educational and occupational opportunity between rural and urban communities. The occupations obtained were, for the most part, consistent with the occupational aspirations expressed at the time of high school graduation, although there is considerable evidence of ambition over-working reasonable possibilities of attainment for considerable numbers of each group. It is clear that many youth of equal ability and achievement i high school, it is a distinct advantage for the youth to have well-educated parents who are established in high prestige occupations, and to live in a large community where colleges are present and job opportunities

are comparatively varied and plentiful. There is good reason for many able youth in rural and smaller communities to be migrating to the cities.

It would seem that too many youth are not taking advantage of the opportunities available in vocational schools. Many who now attend college but do not complete degrees might find these programs satisfying as well as leading to occupational careers equal to or better than those that followed their fore-shortened college experience. Certainly, there are sizeable numbers of youth who now stop their schooling with high school graduation who can qualify for better occupational status through programs of vocational training and education. If post-high school programs are not possible for many of these youth, there may be need to develop more and stronger high school programs designed to prepare graduates for employability rather than further formal education. Thirty-five percent of high school graduates (boys) is too large a number to enter the modern occupational world without the specific knowledge, skills, and habits of work that are essential to employability. This percentage (35%) is reduced by the number of boys who stay on farms, or who, by reason of farm rearing, are prepared for agricultural occupations. But, on the whole, our educational programs must do better for this large segment of our future population.

There is much in this study to confirm current speculations about the growing connection between advanced education and occupational opportunity. Davis, for example, has observed, "One may hazard the guess that the trend is for the student's personal characteristics to become increasingly important and the socio-economic status of his parents to play a lesser part in determining who will reach the elite positions..... The increasing educational attainment and increasing professionalization of the American occupational structure result in increasing professionalization of college graduates and declining occupational returns of all other educational attainment levels....

To the extent that opportunities for obtaining a college degree are not opening as fast as the optimists believe and the rewards for completing college are not declining as the pessimists believe, it is fair to claim that in the last half of the twentieth century America's system of higher education is coming to be the single most strategic determinant of the life-chances of the Nation's young men."[7/]

It has been pointed out that we live in a credential society.[3/] We often do not evaluate a person on the basis of his ability to perform satisfactorily in a specific occupation, but on the basis of his possession of certain credentials. If he does not have a high school diploma, he can not qualify for one level of jobs. If he does not have a college degree, he is not considered for another level of jobs. If he has not spent a specified number of years, or has not taken a specified number of courses leading to licenses, certificates, or apprenticeships, he cannot qualify for still other positions or occupations. The emphasis on credentials does not argue against their purpose, their reasonableness, or their value. But the situation does show the strong tendency to base occupational opportunity and career advancement upon school progress, and to use the higher educational system as a screening device to cull rather than cultivate youth according to their educational needs and potential. At the same time it places strong pressure upon the school system to arrange its program primarily to facilitate the progress of youth who are going farther up the educational ladder; it places inordinate pressure upon all high school youth to adjust to work geared primarily for the academically talented; and it feeds the idea that all youth must have a college degree.

Youth leave our educational system at many points. They leave in large numbers, and move into an occupational world often with little or no orientation preparation, skill or assistance from the educational system. The tragedy is not that many leave school earlier than others do. Given the wide range of

human abilities, interests, and inclinations we should expect youth to discontinue their formal schooling at differing ages and at varying levels of our educational system. The tragedy is when youth leave school they leave either for the wrong reasons-- (Unsuitable educational programs, artificial or arbitrary requirements or standards, preventable economic or racial barriers), or with insufficient preparation for useful employment, or into a job world which offers them no suitable occupational chance. All of us at some convenient point discontinue our formal schooling and go to work. An important item of unfinished educational business is serious attention and action, first, toward providing suitable work opportunities for youth who leave school or college at differing points; and second, toward providing educational programs that prepare and usher such youth into useful employment, effective citizenship, and satisfying life at points earlier than the requirement of a baccalaureate degree. After all, three out of four American youth do not complete college degrees. Our times call for a consideration of appropriate goals and needs for"middle education"--that level between the sophomore year of high school and the junior year of college. If we can find valid and feasible answers to the problems of youth whose education terminates within this range, we shall have made an important advance in the Nation's educational arrangements.

* * * * *

SELECTED REFERENCES AND NOTES

Footnotes

1. This is a descriptive report of some of the findings of a follow-up study of high school graduates in Wisconsin. An unpublished doctoral thesis has been completed which attempts, through analysis of regression to predict the eventual occupational status of the graduates from combinations of background variables described in this report. The thesis is titled, "The Prediction of Occupational Status of Non-College-Going High School Graduates," and was completed by Brian Heath, Department of Counselling and Behavioral Studies, School of Education, University of Wisconsin.

   Professor William H. Sewell, Department of Sociology, is making a comprehensive analysis of the entire 8,800 students followed-up in this study. The follow-up aspects of this report were done in collaboration with his study. He and Professor Ronald Pavalko, also of the Department of Sociology, kindly made available to us certain measures, techniques, and counsel that greatly assisted the preparation of this report.

2. Little, J. Kenneth (a) "A Statewide Inquiry Into Decisions of Youth About Education Beyond High School." School of Education, University of Wisconsin, September, 1958. _____, (b) "Explorations Into The College Plans and Experiences of High School Graduates." School of Education, University of Wisconsin, January, 1960.

3. Ibid., (a) p. 40.

4. This scale was developed by Professor William H. Sewell. (See reference No. 1.)

5. "A Socio-Economic Index and Equivalent NORC Prestige Score for Occupations in the Detailed Classification of the Bureau of the Census: 1950." A mimeographed bulletin. Social Science Research Institute, University of Wisconsin.

6. Little, J. Kenneth, op. cit. (a) p. 47.

7. Davis, James A., "Higher Education: Selection and Opportunity." THE SCHOOL REVIEW, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Autumn 1963), pp. 258, 263, 265.

8. Miller, S. M., "Drop-Outs--A Political Problem" in THE SCHOOL DROP-OUT, National Education Association, Washington, D.C., 1964, pp. 11-24.

APPENDIX

SCHEDULE OF INFORMATION

To the parents of _____

SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

1. Since high school has your son attended any school or college?
   YES____ NO____

2. If YES

Name of School	Years from	Years to	Graduated
_____	_____	_____	Yes____No____
_____	_____	_____	Yes____No____
_____	_____	_____	Yes____No____

EMPLOYMENT

3. What is his present occupation?_____

   Name of firm_____Job Title_____

OTHER

4. Is your son married? YES____ NO____, year of marriage_____

5. Military service: now serving____has served____has not served_____

6. What is your son's present mailing address?

_____
Street

_____ _____
City State

APPENDIX B

The information below presents certain background facts about the 883 seniors who by reason of their present status were not included in the analysis of occupational aspiration and attainment.

	STUDENTS	MILITARY SERVICE	UNEMPLOYED
Total Number	378	447	58
Attended college	356	257	15
Attended vocational school	22	54	12
Attended none	--	136	31
Scholastic Ability			
Low 1/2	93	162	32
Top 1/2	285	101	26
High School Achievement			
Low 1/2	140	225	42
Top 1/2	238	222	16
Socio-Economic Status			
Low 1/3	59	133	26
Middle 1/3	181	232	27
High 1/3	138	82	5
Size of Community			
Less than 25,000	109	161	13
25,000 - 49,999	109	131	19
Metropolitan Area	160	155	24